

DADDY AND THE BIRDS

Daddy passed out in the car as he often did at celebrations and dances. Aunt Vesta was driving him home. I don't know why she drove him this time instead of Mama, but halfway home she swerved to pass a car at the same time that Daddy came to. He opened his eyes, thought she was running off the road, grabbed the wheel and gave it a flip. The car went over on its right side cutting off Daddy's three fingers that were outside the window leaving them hanging by one thin skin. When the ambulance arrived, Daddy stood before getting inside, raised his hand with those three dangling fingers and waved goodbye to all.

He never could pitch his fast curve ball again or play the trumpet, but he could still strip a cow with the two remaining fingers. When kids asked him, as they often did, what happened to his fingers, he pointed to the trees and told them the birds had eaten them.

-- Linda King

Los Angeles CA

TOP OF THE TREE

He could trace his family tree back to his father, a luxury Philpot could do without.

He couldn't blame the old goat for his own useless life except for not marrying out of it:

could he really have loved that mountain-woman who barred his way to better things? Could he, Philpot,

blame Maureen for rendering him
heirless in spite of his children?
He had waited years for Maureen's breasts

to grow succulent, for her to erupt
under a short maternity skirt; but
in all their married life they'd never

experienced a first together: now
he resents not being called endearing
names by beautiful women who could

pass the secret on to children
able to convert him into store-
fronts or tricks to rival Concorde.

Rare chap, Philpot, belatedly doing his bit
to keep the population down, to
liberate his wife: free drinks all round.

PHILPOT EMBARRASSES THE HEADMASTER

Cautious as a novice, he will not
say whether it's a son or a daughter

he comes to claim an interest in. Philpot
might undervalue the good opinion

of neighbors and creditors, but he knows
something about Psychology: he will not

embarrass his off-spring, secure in their
mothers (using the plural throughout

for safety) name. His fastidiousness
keeps two adults in detention long after

the other parents have departed, the new
Commissioner conducting his one man

Royal Enquiry on the performance of all
the black kids in the school. The head-

master is reluctant to discourage a new
recruit, and finally sighs with something

sharper than relief when this one proclaims
himself -- neither satisfied nor its opposite,

careful not to give the game away -- but
a family man again recalled to duty.